

IN THE CLAIMS:

Applicants amend claims 1, 4, 6, 23-25, and 28, as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A medical needle shield apparatus comprising:

a first housing being configured to actuate a needle cannula disposed therewith; and

a second housing being releasably engageable with the first housing, the needle cannula being disposed for slidable movement with the second housing such that the second housing is extensible from a retracted position to an extended position to enclose a distal end of the needle cannula;

~~the second housing including~~ a binding member disposed within the second housing and comprising that defines binding surfaces that define ~~form~~ an aperture configured for slidable receipt of the needle cannula between the retracted position and the extended position,

the binding member further comprising a retainer extending therefrom such that the retainer is engageable with the needle cannula to prevent inclination of the binding member while the retainer is engaged with the needle cannula,

the binding member further comprising one or more ~~including at least one~~ drag inducing members that engage ~~such that the at least one drag inducing member engages~~ the needle cannula during slidable receipt of the needle cannula to create a drag force with the needle cannula, the drag force and second housing facilitating inclination ~~facilitate rotation~~ of the binding member relative to a longitudinal axis of the needle cannula once the retainer extends

beyond the distal end of the needle cannula such that the binding surfaces engage the needle cannula to prevent slidable movement of the needle cannula in the extended position of the second housing.

2. (Withdrawn) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the binding member further includes a needle communicating surface extending therefrom such that the needle communicating surface is engageable with the needle cannula to prevent rotation of the binding member.

3. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the binding member includes a substantially planar aperture plate that includes the binding surfaces that form the aperture.

4. (Currently Amended) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 3, wherein the one or more ~~at least one~~ drag inducing member includes a pair of arms extending from the aperture plate.

5. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the second housing includes an inner housing that is disposed with the binding member.

6. (Currently Amended) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein the inner housing defines one or more ~~at least one~~ blocking members extending from an interior surface thereof, the one or more ~~at least one~~ blocking members being engageable with the binding member for urging the binding member to a binding orientation.

7. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the needle cannula includes an inner needle disposed for slidable movement with the needle cannula.

8. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 7, wherein the inner needle includes a lateral recess disposed adjacent a distal end thereof.

9. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 7, further including a means for selectively locking movement between the needle cannula and inner needle.

10. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 7, wherein the inner needle includes a cutting edge.

11. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the needle cannula includes a cutting edge.

12. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the second housing includes a handle, the handle defining a cavity configured for receipt of the first housing such that the first housing is releasably engageable with the second housing.

13. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the first housing includes a handle.

14. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the first housing is releasably engageable with the second housing.

15. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the first housing is releasably engageable with the second housing by means of an operable release.

16. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 15, wherein activation of the operable release selectively locks movement between the needle cannula and inner needle.

17. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the first housing includes a locking configuration that mates with a groove of the second housing to facilitate releasable engagement of the first housing and the second housing.

18. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the first housing includes an actuating mechanism that actuates the needle cannula.

19. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 18, wherein the actuating mechanism includes a slide mounted with the needle cannula, the slide facilitating axial movement of the needle cannula.

20. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 19, wherein the actuating mechanism includes a biasing member that engages the slide to bias the needle cannula in a distal direction.

21. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 20, wherein the actuating mechanism includes a trigger that is connected to the biasing member for actuation thereof.

22. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 20, including a spring means for maintaining the actuating assembly in a proximal position.

23. (Currently Amended) A medical needle shield apparatus comprising:

a first housing including an actuating mechanism that actuates a needle cannula disposed therewith; and

a second housing including a handle, the handle defining a cavity configured for receipt of the first housing such that the first housing is releasably engageable with the second housing, the needle cannula being disposed for slidable movement with the second housing such that the second housing is extensible from a retracted position to an extended position to enclose a distal end of the needle cannula,

~~the second housing including a binding member~~ disposed within the second housing
and comprising having an aperture plate, the aperture plate defining binding surfaces that
define form an aperture configured for slidable receipt of the needle cannula between the
retracted position and the extended position,

the binding member further comprising a retainer extending therefrom such that the
retainer is engageable with the needle cannula to prevent inclination of the binding member
while the retainer is engaged with the needle cannula,

the binding member further comprising one or more ~~including at least one~~ drag inducing member that engage ~~such that the at least one drag inducing member engages~~ the needle cannula during slidable receipt of the needle cannula to create a drag force with the needle cannula, the

drag force facilitating inclination ~~facilitates rotation~~ of the binding member relative to a longitudinal axis of the needle cannula once the retainer extends beyond the distal end of the needle cannula such that the binding surfaces engage the needle cannula to prevent slidable movement of the needle cannula in the extended position of the second housing;

~~wherein the binding member further includes a needle communicating surface extending therefrom such that the needle communicating surface is engageable with the needle cannula to prevent rotation of the binding member.~~

24. (Currently Amended) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 23, wherein the one or more ~~at least one~~ drag inducing members includes a pair of arms extending from the aperture plate.

25. (Currently Amended) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 23, wherein the second housing includes an inner housing that is disposed with the binding member, the inner housing defining one or more ~~at least one~~ blocking members extending from an interior surface thereof, the one or more ~~at least one~~ blocking member being engageable with the binding member for urging the binding member to a binding orientation.

26. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 23, wherein the first housing includes a locking configuration that mates with a groove of the second housing to facilitate releasable engagement of the first housing and the second housing.

27. (Original) A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 23, wherein the actuating mechanism includes a spring biased slide mounted with the needle cannula, the slide facilitating axial movement of the needle cannula.

28. (Currently Amended) A medical needle shield apparatus comprising:

a core including a spring biased actuating mechanism that actuates a needle cannula disposed therewith, the actuating mechanism having a slide that is mounted with the needle cannula to facilitate axial movement thereof, the needle cannula including an inner needle disposed for slidable movement with the needle cannula, the inner needle including a lateral recess disposed adjacent a distal end thereof; and

a base including a handle, the handle defining a cavity configured for receipt of the first housing such that the first housing is releasably engageable with the second housing, the needle cannula being disposed for slidable movement with the second housing such that the second housing is extensible from a retracted position to an extended position to enclose a distal end of the needle cannula,

the second housing further comprising ~~including~~ an inner housing that supports a binding member, the binding member having an aperture plate, the aperture plate comprising ~~defining~~ binding surfaces that define ~~form~~ an aperture configured for slidable receipt of the needle cannula between the retracted position and the extended position,

the binding member further comprising a retainer extending therefrom such that the retainer is engageable with the needle cannula to prevent inclination of the binding member while the retainer is engaged with the needle cannula,

the binding member including one or more ~~a pair of~~ friction members that engage the needle cannula during slidable receipt of the needle cannula to create a drag force with the needle cannula, the drag force facilitating inclination ~~facilitates rotation~~ of the binding member relative

to a longitudinal axis of the needle cannula once the retainer extends beyond the distal end of the needle cannula such that the binding surfaces engage the needle cannula to prevent slidable movement of the needle cannula in the extended position of the second housing;

~~wherein the binding member further includes a needle communicating surface extending therefrom such that the needle communicating surface is engageable with the needle cannula to prevent rotation of the binding member.~~